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Massachusetts Marine

Recreational Fishing

Information

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MENTS

GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
COLLECTION

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Definitions

Anadromous Fish: Saltwater fish that return to fresh water systems to reproduce.

Angling: Fishing with handline or rod, with naturally or artificially baited hook.

Closed Season: The time when fish cannot be lawfully taken.

Fish: Any animal life inhabiting the ocean or connecting waters, including crustacea or marine fish, whether free swimming or free moving, any shellfish or sea worms, whether or not imbedded in the soil.

Waters Under the Jurisdiction of the Commonwealth: All the waters within the rise and fall of the tide extending out to three miles from an established coastal baseline and all the waters of Massachusetts Bay, Cape Cod Bay, and Nantucket Sound. It does not include the waters within or above any fishladder or dam, nor the waters above any tidal bound established by DEP in streams flowing to the sea.

Minimum Size Limits are measured as the straight line (not curved over the body) from the tip of the snout to the tip of the tail. Forked fish tails may be squeezed together for the final measurement.

Sale of Fish: A commercial permit is required to sell fish.

Snagging or Snatching: The taking of fish not attracted by bait or artificial lure with hooks, gangs or lures whether baited or unbaited, in a manner as to pierce and hook a fish in any part of the body other than the mouth.

Prohibitions

Snagging, Snatching of Anadromous Fish: including shad, smelt, white perch, striped bass, trout, and salmon, but excluding alewives or river herring is prohibited.

The taking of striped bass by any other means other than hook and line is prohibited.

The discard of dead, legal size striped bass is prohibited.

The taking of billfish using other than a rod and reel is prohibited.

The taking of Atlantic Salmon, Sturgeon, all Marine Mammals, all sea turtles and the Diamond Back Terrapin from Massachusetts waters is prohibited.

For anyone, except the owner, to handle destroy or molest any lobster or crab pot or other fishing gear including any gear swept up on the shore, beaches or flats whether public or private, or to take fish therefrom is illegal.

To take crabs by pot without a permit is illegal.

Permits

Presently, there is no license requirement for recreational saltwater angling, however, a commercial permit is required when any fish are sold and when more than the recreational bag limits are in possession of the angler.

Non Commercial Lobster Permits are required to fish for or take lobsters for personal use, using a maximum of 10 pots. This authorizes the holder and members of the holder's immediate family, residing in the same residence, to fish for and take lobsters. The immediate family is defined as the spouse, parents, children, grandparents, sisters and brothers of the permit holder. This permit may be endorsed for diving by only the permit holder. Other family members may purchase additional permits for diving only.

Recreational Shellfishing is permitted in designated clean areas and regulated by the individual Towns. Contact your Town department of Natural Resources for local regulations and permit acquisition.

A Bait permit is required for an individual to take softshell clams from a contaminated area (designated by the Division to be unsafe for human consumption because of pollution) for bait purpose only. The license is restricted to one 12-quart pail per week. Such bait cannot be sold.

Note: A person may, without a special permit, use a small net of no more than 200 square feet inside those inshore waters listed in 322 CMR 4.02(2) or inside any estuary, embayment, salt pond, tidal creek, river, or an other similar body of inshore water for the sole purpose of obtaining bait fish for personal use.



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**Massachusetts DMF Recreational Finfish & Shellfish Restrictions
for 1997**

SPECIES	MIN.SIZE	OPEN SEASON	POSSESSION LIMIT
AMERICAN EEL	4"	all year	none
BLACK SEA BASS	12"	all year	none
BLUEFISH	none	all year	10 fish
COD	21"	all year	10 fish ++
HADDOCK	21"	all year	10 fish ++
SCUP	9"	all year	none
SMETL *	none	6/16-3/14	none
STRIPED BASS *	28"	all year	1 fish
TAUTOG	16"	all year	6 fish
WEAKFISH	16"	all year	none
AMERICAN PLAICE (DAB)	14"	all year	none
GREY SOLE	14"	all year	none
FLUKE	14½"	all year	10 fish
WINDOWPANE	12"	all year	none
WINTER FLOUNDER	12"	5/1 - 2/28	10 fish
YELLOWTAIL FLOUNDER	13"	all year	none
BLUE MARLIN*	86"	all year	1 fish
SAILFISH*	57"	all year	1 fish
WHITE MARLIN*	62"	all year	1 fish

++ a 10 fish bag limit for any combination of cod and haddock.

* Striped bass are to be taken only by hook & line, billfish only by rod & reel and smelt by angling. Striped bass must be transported with head, body and tail intact - no mutilation permitted. The Discard of dead, legal size striped bass is prohibited.

SPECIES	MINIMUM SIZE	OTHER RESTRICTIONS
BLUE CRAB	4½" shell width (spine to spine)	egg bearers cannot be taken; 50 crabs/day; no pots; closed season is 12/1 - 3/31, inclusive
OTHER EDIBLE CRABS (excludes green crabs)	none	same as for blue crab
LOBSTER	3¼" carapace length	egg bearers cannot be taken; state license required
BAY SCALLOP	well defined growth ring	consult town regulations
CONCH	2¾" shell width	consult town regulations
OYSTER	3" shell diameter	consult town regulations
QUAHOG	1" shell thickness	consult town regulations
SEA SCALLOP	3½" shell height	
SOFTSHELL CLAM	2" shell diameter	consult town regulations
SURF CLAM	5" shell diameter	consult town regulations

NOTE: Finfish are measured from the tip of the snout to the farthest extremity of the tail, except for black sea bass where the tail filament is not included, and in billfish that are measured from the tip of the lower jaw to the tail fork. Regulations are subject to change; contact the Division for details (617)727-3193.



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